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Field Investigations in Pomology

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

The proper age and size fruit tree for planting the home and the commercial orchard.

For upwards of 50 years it has been the custom of nurserymen to grow the apple tree in nursery rows to 3 years of age, heading and branching the tops the third year, at about 3 feet above the ground. When the trees are dug they are sorted into 3 grades, according to the height and the caliper. They are priced and catalogued according to height and caliper, and not according to the quality and their orchard planting value. The height and the caliper never shrink in handling, rehandling ( jobbing ) fruit trees. "An egg is an egg," said the boy, as he took the largest. A tree is a tree, says the planter to himself, and he always takes the largest. This is the age, size and selling system of the largest proportion of the fruit trees grown and sold, and is the age and size almost invariably bought and planted in the home orchard. Results, disappointment, loss and failure. The home orchard is the perpetual demonstration of the old, old adage, the more haste the less speed. The perpetual experiment of planting Big Trees for Quick Results.

The planter of the commercial apple orchard of today, demands an apple tree with a 1 year old top, 4 to 6 feet in height. As soon as the trees are planted, he cuts off all the tops to within 15 inches of the ground, removes and burns them. Burns up 2/3rds, to 3/4ths, of the purchase from the nurseryman. Burns up all the best and strongest buds that were on the trees he bought and has only the lower and weaker buds left on the remaining stubs 15 inches high. He has moved the pruning knife from the nursery to the orchard, and from the very moment the trees are planted, he uses it, savagely, viciously and annually during the life of the orchard. He has invented SCIENTIFIC PRUNING and a short lived orchard.

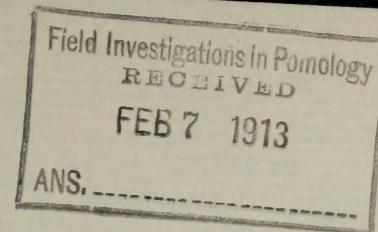
The arbitrary removal with the pruning knife of a considerable portion of the top of a growing tree, either in the nursery or in the orchard, leaving in the ground intact, the whole root system to over supply the remaining top, is always followed by an extreme and abnormal growth which promotes disease, decay and the premature death of the tree. The more severe the climate, the more quickly damaging results follow. The most rapid growing varieties ( regardless of hardiness ) and the tender varieties perish first. The slower growing varieties combined with hardiness will endure this ignorant misuse the longest. "Hardy Trees" is the "will o' the wisp of the orchardist in a severe climate.

In short, the proper age and size fruit tree for planting the home and the commercial orchard, is, the youngest and the shortest well grown fruit tree. Quality and orchard planting value, the guide in buying the trees and not the height and the caliper.

We know much of the "cussedness" of the nurseryman, the tree agent and the jobber and also some of the persistent short-sightedness of the buyer and planter of fruit trees. If you have not already placed your order for fruit trees, we will be pleased to argue this question with you further. We sell only our own grown stocks. We sell direct to the planter. No agents. We sell only the varieties we grow and the amounts. This places our nursery outside the class of dealers, agents and jobbers and we hope upon a higher plane.

Yours respectfully, Henry Lake Sons Co., Nurserymen,  
February 1, 1913. Black River Falls, Wisconsin.





The Apple has long been regarded as "the king of fruits." It contains more of the elements of food and diet and in a greater degree than any other fruit or vegetable. No fruit is more ignorantly, deceitfully and dishonestly placed upon the market nor more ignorantly consumed. The apple should be always eaten fresh, not cooked, and in limited quantity on account of its richness.

Up to the present time the selling price of apples has always been too near or below the cost of production. Too many varieties of very inferior quality have made up the bulk of all apples grown, greatly restricting consumption, causing the grower to resort to deceit and dishonesty in selling and greatly depressing the price.

Under such discouraging circumstances, the length of time required to bring an orchard to a productive bearing age, the nature of the fruit (being grown upon a tree), the science of apple orcharding has made no material advance during the past 30 to 40 years. The study given the subject, is largely, the study of "horticultural dope." Elevation, slope, airdrainage, dynamiting the holes before planting the trees, leaning the trees to the one o'clock sun, scientific pruning, etc, etc, adnoscum, adinfinitum, disregarding the fact that nature grows trees upon all elevations, all slopes, all levels and on all kinds of soils, under certain fixed laws of tree growth with which the ignorant nurseryman and ignorant orchardist are in constant warfare.

The growing of fruit trees by nurserymen has a close connection with orcharding and is upon the same level with regard to profit, honor, deceit and dishonesty. The nurserymen are always heavily stocked with hundreds of worthless varieties of fruit trees which require flowery descriptive catalogues, slippery tongued tree agents and a vast amount of horticultural dope to annually dispose of at a profit. The annual planting and productions of these worthless varieties are the greatest enemies of the fruit grower at the present time.

State and federal regulation of the sale of tobacco, beer and whiskey has been a great factor in the development of profitable production and sale of these three great products.

State and federal regulation of the sale of apples and apple trees is almost here and will be as great a factor in the future profitable production and sale of apples.

The planter who begins an apple orchard today, using common horse sense methods instead of "horticultural dope", using care in selecting the varieties and buying the trees, will be well repaid for his enterprise as soon as the trees arrive at a profitable bearing age.

We grow fruit trees for this class of planters, sell them direct, no agents. Prices according to the varieties and quantity wanted will be given on receipt of your list.

Henry Lake Sons Co., Nurserymen.

Black River Falls, Wisconsin. January 15, 1913.

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